7:Columbia U. S-4,5 1956 RH1 Caucasia
RH1

496 steppes to the north and northeast of Stavropol. These lines must sooner or later be linked with the Kikhoretskaia-Stalingrad line at Salsk, from where there is a connection with Rostov, and perhaps eventually with the connecting link between Astrakhan and Kizlyar.

In the mountains proper, railroad construction meets certain difficulties or even limitation which prevent the extension of the single subsidiary lines of the mountain areas proper. This is particularly evident with regard to the side-lines of the Trans-Caucasian railroad, all along the southern slopes of the Caucasus.

315 The railroad system of the Caucasus, which has proven insufficient to handle with any efficiency the traffic demands made by the industrial centers, is somewhat compensated for by the oil pipelines. There is the double one across Trans-Caucasia, from Baku, via Tiflis and the Surami pass, to Batumi on the Black Sea, and the North Caucasian pipe line which connects the Groznyi and Maikop petroleum areas with the ports of Makhach-kala on the Caspian Sea and Tuapse on the Black Sea, after which it goes via Rostov directly to the Ukrainian heavy industries. These pipelines relieve the demands upon the railroads to a considerable extent.

497 The above-mentioned inadequacy of the railroad system is typical not only of the Caucasus but of the entire Soviet Union. This

497 is aggravated by a certain lack of planning and coordination, which is not only a heritage from the Tsarist past but can still be found today. For example, I need only mention Kazakhstan, particularly the area of Karaghanda. The inadequacy of the railroads is especially true with regard to passenger travel, where the needs of the passengers have been treated with complete neglect. A look at the railroad maps and timetables of the Soviet railroads shows immediately that in many cases, the simplest and most convenient (insofar as there is any convenience) connection is not always the one involving the shortest distance. Thus, when travelling from the Caucasus to West Siberia, it has always proved much easier to go via Moscow; many similar cases, as well as certain limitations on the capacity of Russian trains, always cause heavy passenger congestion in Moscow. Another demonstration of neglect of passenger needs is the fact that in many instances the railroads pass by major towns and even cities at a fair distance instead of entering them. This can be noted in many areas of the Soviet Union. In the Caucasus, this is the case with such cities as Kirovabad (Gandža) and K'ut'aisi, both of which are 5 kms away from the main line. K'ut'aisi can be reached by a subsidiary line leading up to Tkvibuli, but Kirovabad (Gandža) requires switching to another means of transportation. A similar situation prevails in Vladikavkaz (Dzaudžyqau), about 22 kms from Beslan, where the subsidiary line branches off from the main

7:Columbia U. S-4, 5 1956 RH1 Caucasia
RH1

497 railroad, which in the Vladikavkaz-Groznyi area is divided into two main lines. Those responsible for building the railroads were evidently "not willing" to lay the southern branch right through Vladikavkaz, or at least its northern suburbs. If a passenger has to travel from Vladikavkaz to Kizlyar, he must change at least three times; so that on this relatively short distance of not quite 300 kms., he loses more time than on a much longer trip--say to Rostov or Baku, for which he may board a direct train right at Vladikavkaz, or at least at Beslan. Many similar situations should be added here. This shows that the railroad system of the Caucasus is concerned chiefly with long-distance transportation and not at all with local needs; moreover, it is primarily concerned with the transport of goods, to the utter neglect of passengers. Apart from this, the strategical significance of this framework of railroads is not inconsiderable.